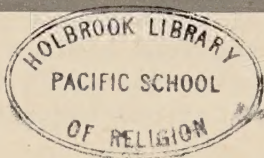


ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

Published under the auspices of the: World Council of Churches · International Missionary Council
World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations · World Young Women's Christian Association
World's Student Christian Federation · World Council of Christian Education · United Bible Societies

EDITOR: JOHN GARRETT · 17 ROUTE DE MALAGNOU · GENEVA · SWITZERLAND
TEL. 36 71 30 · CABLES OIKOUMENE U.S. ENQUIRIES: WCC, 156 FIFTH AVE. NEW YORK 10: TEL. WATKINS 4-8551

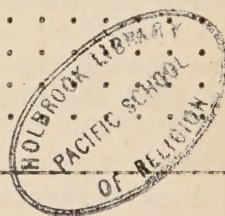
No. 3/26th Year



23rd January, 1959.

On Other Pages

Norway's Bishop Berggrav Dies	Page 2
Pentecostalist Leader Hails "Revival in Ecumenical Movement" . . .	Page 3
Archbishop writes to Sweden on Women's Ordination	Page 3
US Methodist Missions Transferred to Nationals	Page 4
Communist Paper Warns Against Church Activity in USSR	Page 4
Christian Labour Unions Urged for Africa	Page 5
East-West Conference Held in Frankfurt	Page 5
Church Unity Moves Forward in Java	Page 6
In Brief	Page 6



Week of Prayer Movement Grows

(Geneva) - Special services and events marking the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity began in many countries on Sunday, January 18 (see EPS No. 45, 1958).

The Cathedral of St. Pierre in Geneva was crowded for a united ecumenical service arranged by an ecumenical group from the Geneva churches. The preacher was Pastor J.G. Bodmer, Reformed, and participants included representatives of the Greek Orthodox, Old Catholic, Methodist, Lutheran, Quaker, Free Evangelical and Anglican communities in the international city, where the World Council of Churches has its headquarters.

In the Geneva service, as in a concert of Christian music held in the French city of Lyon on January 16, a choir sang Negro spirituals. The Lyon concert, a new departure in the form of the celebrations arranged each year on the initiative of Father P. Michalon, the successor of the late Abbé Paul Couturier, included motets and anthems of Vittoria and Palestrina, sung by the choral society of the Roman Catholic parish of St. Bruno, as well as the spirituals by the "Companions of Jordan" group.

The World Council's Commission on Faith and Order, which sponsors observance of the Week of Prayer for Unity, reports a greater response than ever before to the call for the observance. The volume of advance information and editorial

The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian Movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items. EPS may be freely reproduced in any form with acknowledgment.

comment in church publications exceeds all previous records. The widespread endorsement of the week by the WCC's member churches has led to reprinting of the forms of prayer issued by Faith and Order in many languages. Distribution of the WCC material to stimulate local activity has increased from 10,000 copies in 1955 to 144,500 in 1959. In all, 60 countries have received mailings, and among translations are those into Spanish, Finnish, Swedish, Tamil and Sinhalese in addition to French, English and German.

From Lyon, the Roman Catholic sponsors of prayer for unity "according to Christ's will, in His way and at His time", have this year sent out 550,000 brochures containing intercessions similar to those in the WCC's material. A Roman Catholic priest in Spain ordered 25,000. Fifty thousand have been distributed in England. Translations have been made in Danish and Swedish and into Portuguese for use in Latin America. At the last moment requests exceeded available supplies by 30,000. EPS, Geneva

Norway's Bishop Berggrav Dies

(Oslo) - Bishop Eivind Berggrav, former primate of Norway and a president of the World Council of Churches from 1950 - 1954, died on January 14 after being in ill health for several years.

The bishop was a well-known leader in the ecumenical movement and had been president of the United Bible Societies.

Bishop Berggrav was one of the most widely known figures in the resistance to National Socialism in Norway at the time of the occupation of the country in World War II. There are many stories about his heroism.

One of Bishop Berggrav's special concerns was for the work of the Bible Societies, both the Bible Society in his own country and the Bible Society movement throughout the world. He was one of the moving spirits in the formation of the United Bible Societies in 1946, serving as its first President and only relinquishing that position in 1957 on account of ill health. The United Bible Societies would not have taken root so quickly or so effectively without his faith and vision.

When the news of Bishop Berggrav's death was received in the headquarters of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, the council's general secretary, Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, issued a statement that said:

"Bishop Eivind Berggrav was one of the most generally beloved and widely trusted leaders of the ecumenical movement. In the last years before the second world war when he was chairman of the World Alliance for Promoting Friendship Through the Churches, he made great efforts to convince the governments that war should be avoided. During the war he became a symbol of the spiritual resistance against totalitarianism. After the war he was an apostle of reconciliation. As one of the presidents of the World Council he played a great role in creating in the World Council's meetings an atmosphere of mutual confidence. He was, as it were, one of the 'pastors' of the ecumenical movement and reminded us constantly of the essential biblical verities. It was therefore natural that he became president of the United Bible Societies. He was bound by ties of deep friendship with Bishop Bell (Chichester). What he wrote at the time of Bishop Bell's death can also be said about him: 'His force was a pure heart and a sacrificial readiness to give help'."

Dr. Visser 't Hooft also sent a telegram to Oslo saying that: "Bishop Berggrav will be remembered among us as peacemaker, leader of spiritual resistance, pastoral friend, builder of World Council and above all as man of the Bible." EPS, Geneva

(Note: Pictures are available from WCC Information, Geneva.)

Pentecostalist Leader Hails "Revival" in Ecumenical Movement

(Minneapolis, USA) - The Rev. David J. du Plessis, a well known Pentecostalist leader, has said he is convinced, as a result of personal contacts, that a revival is "touching the hearts" of leaders in the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council.

Declaring that the revival was "not a flash in the pan" Mr. du Plessis said he was optimistic about the future and saw signs of new spiritual life in Greek Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, as well as Protestantism. He referred to the Zoe movement in the Church of Greece.

Supporting the efforts of evangelist Billy Graham to obtain church cooperation in his campaigns, Mr. du Plessis called himself "ecumenical Pentecostal" and said he favoured cooperation in movements for church unity.

Mr. du Plessis, who has been chairman and secretary of recent world Pentecostalist conferences has also been present as an observer at meetings of the WCC and the IMC. EPS, Geneva

Archbishop Sends Letter to Swedish Church on Ordination of Women

(London) - A "personal and private" letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the "appropriate authority" in the Church of Sweden regarding that church's recent decision to admit women to the priesthood, was reported to the January session of the Canterbury Convocation of the Church of England, meeting last week.

The Archbishop, Dr. Geoffrey Fisher, said that it had been clear that the action taken last autumn by the Church of Sweden might cause some embarrassment to the Church of England and that any public reference to it in England might cause embarrassment in Sweden.

"It seemed to me then, and it seems to me still," the Archbishop told the convocation, "that in a matter touching to some degree the diplomatic relations between our two churches, between which there has been a long-standing and close friendship, and calling, therefore, for wise and friendly handling, the step which I took of a personal letter, approved by my advisers, was the right one."

Dr. Fisher said that the personal letter "prepared the way best for subsequent discussion among ourselves and other churches of the Anglican communion in particular. Such discussion seemed to be a necessary precursor of any discussion, formal or informal, with the authorities of the Swedish Church direct."

The letter, he said, referred to the fact that the subject of the ordination of women is under frequent discussion in the World Council of Churches and pointed out that the Free Churches in England have stated their views and policies.

In other action, the convocation commended for further study the interim statement on conversations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church. (See EPS No. 28.) "Throughout the discussions we have had it in mind that the goal of ultimate organic unity must be kept in view," the Bishop of Oxford, Dr. H.J. Carpenter, said. "The objective of inter-communion must mark a stage, but only a stage, towards fuller unity which we believe to be God's purpose." EPS, Geneva

US Methodist Missions Transferred to Nationals

(Buck Hill Falls, Pa.) - Methodist mission work in churches overseas is being rapidly turned over to national leadership, according to three officials of the Woman's Division of Christian Service of the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church, speaking at the board's annual meeting in Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania, this month.

Miss Lucile Colony, executive secretary for India and Pakistan for the Woman's Division, said that leadership of the Methodist Church in India is almost entirely Indian. The church invites missionaries as co-workers. But, she added, in Pakistan missionaries hold the traditional, but not the desired, place of authority.

The most recent development in Africa, it was reported, is in the field of education where many African teachers are becoming principals and head instructors. EPS, Geneva

Communist Paper Warns Against Church Activity in USSR

(Moscow) - Communist party members in Soviet Russia have been told that church activity is on the increase and that they must beware of it.

An article on "The Relations Between the Communist Party and Religion", published in the official paper of the Party's Central Committee, "Partinaja Shisn" (Party Life), attacks indifference to the activity by the churches and says that "neglect of anti-religious propaganda greatly strengthens the Church's position in evangelizing".

Among efforts made by the churches to adapt to contemporary life in the USSR, the article refers to "great versatility in applying new methods of winning people's allegiance, especially that of young people and children". The paper mentions social evenings for youth, excursions, meetings, choirs and musical and dramatic clubs. "In addition to the official clergy, a number of active church members are specially trained for evangelism", the article declares.

Describing other progress made by the churches, the Communist publication says that every sermon preached "aims at increasing people's interest in religion. The clergy seize every opportunity to explain the 'divine significance' of the Church's rites - baptism, marriage, confession", it is claimed. "The church council is responsible for seeing that special attention is paid to the order of worship and careful preparation for it. More and more frequently the higher-ranking priests visit the dioceses, where they attend services in the local churches. Church choirs are being enlarged and a great deal of money is being spent on renovating church buildings".

The writer takes a serious view of the tolerant attitude of some party members to religion and the Church. It is quite out of place for active Communists to attend religious festivals, warns the paper, or to get married in church or have their children baptised - even if they feel they must show consideration for the religious prejudices of their families and think that an anti-church attitude would involve them in difficulties, especially in country districts. The Communist Party warns its members against keeping ikons in the house or receiving priests in their homes.

"There is no room in the party for Communists who fail to break away from their religious prejudices", the article concludes. EPS, Geneva

Christian Labour Unions Urged for Africa

(Pontresina, Switzerland) - Officers of the Protestant Workers' International have urged at a meeting in Switzerland that Christian trade union activity should be stepped up in Africa.

Existing African Christian unions were advised to accept Africans who are not church members provided they recognise the aims of the organisations.

Another recommendation was for formation of Protestant groups within inter-denominational labour unions in collaboration with the African churches and the Protestant Workers' International.

The meeting of the International's officers welcomed signs that "tens of thousands of African workers, many of them not officially members of the Christian Church, are seeking to cooperate with the Christian labour unions".

EPS, Geneva

East-West Conference Held in Frankfurt

(Frankfurt) - Churchmen from the United States and several European countries have gone on record opposing European atomic armament and urging a ban on nuclear weapons, during a Conference for East-West Understanding held in Frankfurt, Germany, this month.

During the sessions, the conference members discussed the responsibility of the churches for peace and worked on plans for a second Christian peace conference to be held in Prague next April.

Speaking on the question of atomic weapons, the conference said that "for political and human reasons, we feel it wrong that Central Europe be atomic-armed, because such a measure makes East-West understanding enormously difficult and delays a peaceful order for a long time".

Represented at the conference were churches in the United Kingdom, West Germany, Estonia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. A representative of the Russian Orthodox Church also attended the meeting.

The conference "recalled with gratitude the first steps towards fellowship between our churches taken at Liselund, at the Prague Peace Conference and at the Nyborg meeting". A Conference of European Churches was held in Nyborg, Denmark, just prior to the Frankfurt meeting. (See EPS No. 2) EPS, Geneva

Church Unity Moves Forward in Java

(Jogjakarta) - The churches in Central Java will form a Central Java Ecumenical Council next July. The step is seen as transitional towards a possible future United Church of Java. In Central Java the churches have a common language and a common task in a predominantly Moslem area.

The synod of the Central Java Church (Gereformeerde) reaffirmed its adherence to the East Asia Christian Conference and its wish to cooperate with the Council of Churches in Indonesia.

Reports on the ecumenical movement were presented to the Central Java Church's synod. The church, which recently joined the World Council of Churches, includes some former members of the Gereformeerde Church in the Netherlands, which is not in the WCC. However, gratitude was expressed for a letter from the sister church in the Netherlands that expressed a desire for close cooperation with the younger churches in Java.

The synod appointed a commission to examine the possibility of relationships with the Presbyterian World Alliance and the international Reformed Ecumenical Synod.

Youth participation in the Java synod was a feature of its recent meetings, which also dealt with work among the laity and education questions.

EPS, Geneva

In Brief

The twenty-second national congress of the Movement for Social Christianity in France will be held at Niort, Deux-Sèvres, in Western France from February 27 to March 1. The subject of the meeting is "The Social Crisis and New Forms of Justice".

* *

Patriarch German of the Orthodox Church in Yugoslavia has been invested by the Yugoslav government with the Order of Cyril and Methodius, First Class, in recognition of his work for peace.

* *

Two Russian Orthodox churchmen, Archimandrite Nikodim and Mikhail Dobrynin, lecturer at the Leningrad Theological Academy, are visiting Ethiopia to study the work of the Church of Ethiopia.

* *

The Council of the Evangelical Church of the Union in Germany has protested against the denial by the East German (DDR) government of a visa for its president, Dr. Franz-Reinhold Hildebrandt of Magdeburg, DDR, to attend the first Conference of European Churches at Nyborg, Denmark, in early January.

* *

The third Anglican Congress will be held in Toronto, Ontario, in 1963. It will be attended by the bishop, one priest and one layman from each of the 350 Anglican dioceses around the world. The last conference was held in 1954 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

* *

The Synod of the Methodist Church of Southern Rhodesia has gone on record opposing independence for the Central African Federation until a majority of the inhabitants have expressed their confidence in the new state, set up in 1953.

* *

Dean A.H. Albrektson, 53, a missionary at Mnene, Southern Rhodesia, has been named the first bishop of the country's African Evangelical Lutheran Church. The church has 10,000 members.

* *

The death sentence passed against Dr. Konrad Möckel, German Protestant pastor in Kronstadt, Hungarian Transylvania, arrested last spring on a charge of "activities against the state", has been modified to life imprisonment.

* *

Hong Kong is reported to be the only place in the world where there are more theological students than the churches can accept. The reason is the constant stream of refugees from China in Hong Kong while the church there has been unable to extend its work. It has been difficult for pastors to go on to Formosa but recently five students were granted visas. EPS, Geneva

